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The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

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Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

Transit crime is back as a top concern in some US cities, and political leaders have taken notice

By PHILIP MARCELO
 Associated Press
 NEW YORK (AP) — Fear of crime on subways and buses is back as a top concern in some U.S. cities, and so are efforts to persuade public officials to take the issue seriously. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Wednesday she would task 750 members of the National Guard with helping patrol the nation's busiest subway system, saying she felt New York City police need reinforcements after a shooting on a train platform and a conductor getting slashed in the neck. Pennsylvania legislators created a special prosecutor to go after crimes committed in the transit system that serves the southeast of the state.



A couple of heavily armed New York State troopers patrol Grand Central terminal, Thursday, March 7, 2024, in New York.

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Associated Press

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Transit crime is back as a top concern in some US cities, and political leaders have taken notice

Continued from Front

In Philadelphia, where a spate of transit-related shootings left three dead and 12 wounded, many of them high schoolers, Mayor Cherelle Parker also promised Thursday to beef up police patrols.

"Enough is enough," she said on WURD radio.

It remains to be seen whether such moves will have any effect on reducing crime in these massive public transit systems.

Hochul acknowledged that calling in the National Guard was as much about soothing fears and making a political statement as it was about making mass transit safer. The city's subways were already safe, the Democrat reasoned, but a show of force might help dispel anxieties more than any statistic.

"If you feel better walking past someone in a uniform to make sure that someone doesn't bring a knife or a gun on the subway, then that's exactly why I did it," Hochul said Thursday on MSNBC. "I want to change the psychology around crime in New York City."

"I'm also going to demonstrate that Democrats fight



A couple of heavily armed New York National Guard soldiers patrol Grand Central terminal, Thursday, March 7, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

crime as well," she added. "So this narrative that Republicans have said that we're soft on crime, that we defund the police? No."

Major crimes in the New York City transit system dropped nearly 3% from 2022 to 2023, with five killings last year, down from 10 the year prior, according to police. Overall, violent crime in the subway system is rare, with train cars and stations being generally as safe as any other public place.

In Pennsylvania, overall crime has declined in recent years on the regional transit system, though there were six killings in 2023, up from a total of seven during

the previous three years. Still, the issue of safety on buses and trains is one that keeps resonating with voters — particularly as some systems recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, when passengers stayed away.

"Recently it's been a little unsafe. So I think they should control it before it gets out of hand," said Alan Uloa, a 43-year-old New York resident. "The other day they slashed the conductor, and that's not cool."

New York Republicans hammered Democrats on crime during the 2022 midterms, a message that helped the GOP capture

suburban congressional seats.

But heightened law enforcement presence can be a double-edged sword, said Alex Piquero, a criminology professor at the University of Miami and the former director of the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics. "For some people, they'd like to see the added security," he said. "And for other people, they'll say we're overreacting."

The political tough talk can also gloss over the reality that transit crime accounts for just a tiny percentage of all crime, said Vincent Del Castillo, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former chief of New York City's transit police.

"You can have 10 to 12 murders in the system when there are literally hundreds across the city," he said. "But because it's so rare, it gets a lot of attention."

The four shootings linked to Philadelphia's bus system began Sunday, when a man was killed by another passenger shortly after they got off a bus.

Two more bus-related shootings in the next two days left two more dead and four injured. Then on

Wednesday eight teenagers waiting to take a city bus home after school were shot, leaving a bus riddled with bullet holes.

Charles Lawson, chief of the city's transit police, vowed that officers will take an aggressive approach, using "every criminal code on the book" to crack down on crime.

"We're going to target individuals concealing their identity," he said. "We're going to target fare evasion. We're going to target open drug use."

The Guard troops in New York won't be that active. Instead they have been tasked with helping police conduct random searches of bags, a practice in place for nearly two decades. Passengers have the right to refuse such searches, though if they do they are asked to leave the subway system.

Guard troops can't make arrests, but if they witness a crime, they can detain someone until police arrive, just as any civilian can do. The troops were deployed Thursday, but transit riders might not have noticed as they weren't widely visible at stations or in trains. □

Pentagon study finds no sign of alien life in reported UFO sightings going back decades

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Pentagon study released Friday that examined reported sightings of UFOs over nearly the last century found no evidence of aliens or extraterrestrial intelligence, a conclusion consistent with past U.S. government efforts to assess the accuracy of claims that have captivated public attention for decades.

The study from the Defense Department's All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office analyzed U.S. government investigations since 1945 of reported sightings of unidentified anomalous phenomena, more popularly

known as UFOs. It found no evidence that any of them were signs of alien life, or that the U.S. government and private companies had reverse-engineered extraterrestrial technology and were hiding it.

"All investigative efforts, at all levels of classification, concluded that most sightings were ordinary objects and phenomena and the result of misidentification," said the report, which was mandated by Congress. Another volume of the report focused on more recent research will be out later.

U.S. officials have endeavored to find answers to legions of reported UFO



The Pentagon is seen from Air Force One as it flies over Washington, March 2, 2022.

Associated Press

sightings over the years, but so far have not identified any actual evidence of extraterrestrial life. A 2021 government report that reviewed 144 sightings of aircraft or other devices apparently flying at mysterious speeds or trajectories

found no extraterrestrial links, but drew few other conclusions and called for better data collection.

The issue received fresh attention last summer when a retired Air Force intelligence officer testified to Congress that the U.S. was

concealing a longstanding program that retrieves and reverse engineers unidentified flying objects. The Pentagon has denied his claims, and said in late 2022 that a new Pentagon office set up to track reports of unidentified flying objects — the same one that released Friday's report — had received "several hundreds" of new reports, but had found no evidence so far of alien life.

The authors of Friday's report said the purpose was to apply a rigorous scientific analysis to a subject that has long captured the American public's imagination. □

Government funding bill advances as Senate works to beat midnight shutdown deadline

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is laboring to approve a \$460 billion package of spending bills in time to meet a midnight deadline for avoiding a shutdown of many key federal agencies, a vote that would get lawmakers about halfway home in wrapping up their appropriations work for the 2024 budget year.

While the Senate is expected to approve the measure, progress was slow in getting the bill to a final vote. Senators were expecting debate to go late into the night. The package advanced on a key test vote Friday afternoon to limit debate, but it remains to be seen if senators can avoid a short shutdown into the weekend as some lawmakers voice concerns about the amount of spending in the bill.

"I would urge my colleagues to stop playing with fire here," said Sen. Susan Collins, the top-ranking Republican member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "It would be irresponsible for us not to clear these bills and do the fundamental job that we have of funding govern-



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., walks outside the chamber as he tries to assemble enough lawmakers to begin the final steps of completing a partial government funding bill, at the Capitol in Washington, Friday, March 8, 2024.

Associated Press

ment. What is more important?"

The measure, which contains six annual spending bills, has already passed the House and would go to President Joe Biden to be signed into law. Meanwhile, lawmakers are negotiating a second package of six bills, including defense, in an effort to have all federal agencies fully funded before a March 22 deadline. In the end, total discretionary spending set by Congress is expected to come in at about \$1.66 trillion for the full budget year ending Sept. 30.

The votes this week come more than five months into the current fiscal year after congressional leaders relied on a series of stopgap bills to keep federal agencies funded for a few more weeks or months at a time while they struggled to reach agreement on full-year spending.

Republicans were able to keep non-defense spending relatively flat compared to the previous year. Supporters say that's progress in an era when annual federal deficits exceeding \$1 trillion have become the norm. But many Republi-

can lawmakers were seeking much steeper cuts and more policy victories.

The House Freedom Caucus, which contains dozens of the GOP's most conservative members, urged Republicans to vote against the first spending package and the second one still being negotiated.

Democrats staved off most of the policy riders that Republicans sought to include in the package. For example, they beat back an effort to block new rules that expand access to the abortion pill mifepristone. They were also able to fully fund a nutrition program for low-income women, infants and children, providing about \$7 billion for what is known as the WIC program. That's a \$1 billion increase from the previous year.

Republicans were able to achieve some policy wins, however. One provision, for example, will prevent the sale of oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China. Another policy mandate prohibits the Justice Department from investigating parents who exercise free speech at local

school board meetings.

Another provision strengthens gun rights for certain veterans, though opponents of the move said it could make it easier for those with very serious mental health conditions like dementia to obtain a firearm.

"This isn't the package I would have written on my own," said Sen. Patty Murray, the Democratic chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "But I am proud that we have protected absolutely vital funding that the American people rely on in their daily lives."

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said one problem he sees with the bill is that there was too much compromise, and that led to too much spending.

"A lot of people don't understand this. They think there is no cooperation in Washington and the opposite is true. There is compromise every day on every spending bill," Paul said.

"It's compromise between big-government Democrats and big-government Republicans," he added. □

Ex-police officer convicted in sexual assault is the first to face tougher new penalty, DOJ says

By **LINDSAY WHITEHURST**
Associated Press

A former Oklahoma police officer convicted in the sexual assault of a woman during a traffic stop will become the first to face a heftier penalty under the 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, the Justice Department said.

Jeffrey Scott Smith Jr., 35, is facing up to 40 years in prison after a jury found him guilty this week of a civil rights violation involving sexual assault, top Justice officials said.

Prosecutors said Smith was on his first solo shift as a police officer in the small Oklahoma town of Savanna when he pulled over the woman and her then-

boyfriend in November 2022. He issued the man a speeding ticket, but then began asking personal questions and turned off his body camera, prosecutors said. He put the woman in his patrol car after discovering a promotional marijuana cigarette from the gentleman's club where she worked. He sexually assaulted her in his patrol car after deactivating the dashboard camera, prosecutors said.

Defense attorney John Cannon said Smith respects the jury's verdict but maintains his innocence.

The case sends an "unequivocal warning" that people who abuse authority through sexual assault will be held accountable,



Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, head of the Department of Justice's civil rights division, speaks during a press conference in Memphis, Tenn., on Sept. 12, 2023.

Associated Press

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said. "This may be the first time

we have used the new enhanced penalties for civil rights violations involving

sexual assault, but it will not be the last," she said.

The previous maximum penalty for the civil rights count was 10 years. Smith also faces up to 20 years on two obstruction of justice counts linked to turning off the cameras.

"Sexual assaults perpetrated by police officers are heinous crimes and a disgraceful breach of the public trust in law enforcement," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. She applauded the woman for coming forward to report the abuse and to testify at trial.

Smith's exact sentence will be determined by a judge at a future hearing. □

Why are clocks set forward in the spring? Thank wars, confusion and a hunger for sunlight

By **JAMIE STENGLE**
Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Once again, most Americans will set their clocks forward by one hour this weekend, losing perhaps a bit of sleep but gaining more glorious sunlight in the evenings as the days warm into summer.

Where did this all come from, though?

How we came to move the clock forward in the spring, and then push it back in the fall, is a tale that spans over more than a century one that's driven by two world wars, mass confusion at times and a human desire to bask in the sun for a long as possible.

There's been plenty of debate over the practice, but about 70 countries about 40% of those across the globe currently use what Americans call daylight saving time.

While springing the clocks forward "kind of jolts our system," the extra daylight gets people outdoors, exercising and having fun, says Anne Buckle, web editor at timeanddate.com, which features information on time, time zones and astronomy.

"The really, really awesome advantage is the bright evenings, right?" she says. "It is actually having hours of daylight after you come home from work to spend time with your family or activities. And that is wonderful."

Here are some things to know so you'll be conversant about the practice of humans changing time:

HOW DID THIS ALL GET STARTED?

In the 1890s, George Vernon Hudson, an astronomer and entomologist in New Zealand, proposed a time shift in the spring and fall to increase the daylight. And in the early 1900s, British home builder William Willett,



Electric Time Co. employee Walter Rodriguez cleans the face of an 84-inch Wegman clock at the plant in Medfield, Mass. Thursday, Oct. 30, 2008.

troubled that people weren't up enjoying the morning sunlight, made a similar push. But neither proposal gained enough traction to be implemented.

Germany began using daylight saving time during World War I with the thought that it would save energy. Other countries, including the United States, soon followed suit. During World War II, the U.S. once again instituted what was dubbed "war time" nationwide, this time year-round.

In the United States today, every state except Hawaii and Arizona observes daylight saving time. Around the world, Europe, much of Canada and part of Australia also implement it, while Russia and Asia don't currently.

INCONSISTENCY AND MASS CONFUSION

After World War II, a patchwork of timekeeping emerged across the United States, with some areas keeping daylight saving time and others ditching it.

"You might have one town has daylight saving time, the neighboring town might have

daylight saving time but start it and end it on different dates and the third neighboring town might not have it at all," says David Prerau, author of the book "Seize the Daylight: The Curious and Contentious Story of Daylight Saving Time."

At one point, if riders on a 35-mile (56-kilometer) bus ride from Steubenville, Ohio, to Moundsville, West Virginia, wanted their watches to be accurate, they'd need to change them seven times as they dipped in and out of daylight saving time, Prerau says.

So in 1966, the U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Time Act, which says states can either implement daylight saving time or not, but it has to be statewide. The act also mandates the day that daylight saving time starts and ends across the country.

Confusion over the time change isn't just something from the past. In the nation of Lebanon last spring, chaos ensued when the government announced a last-minute decision to delay the start of daylight saving time by a month until the end of the Muslim

holy month of Ramadan. Some institutions made the change and others refused as citizens tried to piece together their schedules. Within days, the decision was reversed.

"It really turned into a huge mess where nobody knew what time it was," Buckle says.

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF WE DIDN'T CHANGE THE CLOCKS?

Changing the clocks twice a year leads to a lot of grumbling, and pushes to either use standard time all year, or stick to daylight saving time all year often crop up.

During the 1970s energy crisis, the U.S. started doing daylight saving time all year long, and Americans didn't like it. With the sun not rising in the winter in some areas till around 9 a.m. or even later, people were waking up in the dark, going to work in the dark and sending their children to school in the dark, Prerau says.

"It became very unpopular very quickly," Prerau says.

And, he notes, using standard time all year would mean losing that extra

hour of daylight for eight months in the evenings in the United States.

A NOD TO THE EARLY ADOPTERS

In 1908, the Canadian city of Thunder Bay then the two cities of Fort William and Port Arthur changed from the central time zone to the eastern time zone for the summer and fall after a citizen named John Hewitson argued that would afford an extra hour of daylight to enjoy the outdoors, says Michael deJong, curator/archivist at the Thunder Bay Museum.

The next year, though, Port Arthur stayed on eastern time, while Fort William changed back to central time in the fall, which, predictably, "led to all sorts of confusion," deJong says.

Today, the city of Thunder Bay is on eastern time, and observes daylight saving time, giving the area, "just delightfully warm, long days to enjoy" in the summer, says Paul Pepe, tourism manager for Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission.

The city, located on Lake Superior, is far enough north that the sun sets at around 10 p.m. in the summer, Pepe says, and that helps make up for their cold dark winters. Residents, he says, tend to go on vacations in the winter and stay home in the summer: "I think for a lot of folks here, the long days, the warm summer temperatures, it's a vacation in your backyard." □

Associated Press



A British spy was likely responsible for more lives lost than saved during the Troubles, report says

By PAN PYLAS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A seven-year investigation of a former Irish Republican Army double agent concluded Friday in an interim report that the spy was probably responsible for more deaths than lives saved during Northern Ireland's three-decade conflict.

The probe, known as Operation Kenova, investigated the actions of "Stakeknife," a senior member of the Irish Republican Army who was passing information to British intelligence during the conflict known as the Troubles.

Former intelligence agents have described Stakeknife as Britain's most centrally placed mole within the IRA. He was allegedly permitted by British Army intelligence officers to interrogate, torture and kill IRA colleagues to maintain his cover as the outlawed group's internal security chief.

It has been claimed that his actions saved countless lives, but Jon Boutcher, the senior police officer who led the investigation, said that was "implausible."



A wall painting supporting the Irish Republican Army, seen in the Catholic area of Belfast, Northern Ireland on Nov. 1985.

"I think it probable that this resulted in more lives being lost than saved," said Boutcher, the former chief of the Bedfordshire Police force, who led the investigation until he was appointed head of the Police Service of Northern Ireland six months ago. He authored the interim report. British media identified

Stakeknife in 2003 as Belfast IRA veteran Freddie Scappaticci, who denied the allegations until his death last year.

The report by Operation Kenova published Friday did not confirm Scappaticci as Stakeknife as a result of the British government's "Neither Confirm Nor Deny" policy, which prevents the

identification of agents. Boutcher said that in this case, that policy is "no longer tenable" and that he expected the government to authorize the identifying of the spy when a final report is published.

Next month marks 26 years since the Good Friday Agreement largely ended a three-way conflict involv-

ing Irish republican and British loyalist militants and the U.K. security forces that left 3,600 people dead, some 50,000 wounded and thousands bereaved.

Operation Kenova, which has lasted seven years and cost about 40 million pounds (\$52 million), examined scores of killings and abductions linked to the IRA's notorious "nutting squad," which was responsible for interrogating, torturing and killing people suspected of passing information to British security forces during the conflict.

Scappaticci was linked to to more than a dozen killings involving the unit.

The report concluded that the number of lives he saved were in the "high single figures" or "low double figures and nowhere near hundreds" and that claims that his intelligence saved "'countless' or 'hundreds' of lives are exaggerated." It said there were occasions when preventable crimes, including murder, were allowed to happen and subsequently went unsolved as a result of efforts to protect agents. □

Associated Press

Facing historic shifts, Latin American women to bathe streets in purple on International Women's Day

MEGAN JANETSKY

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Women across Latin America

are bathing their city streets in purple on Friday in commemoration of International Women's Day at a time

when gender rights advocates in the region face both historic steps forward and major setbacks.

Following decades of activism and campaigning by feminist groups, access to things like abortion has rapidly expanded in recent years, sitting in stark contrast of mounting restrictions in the United States. Women have increasingly stepped into political roles in the region of 670 million people, with Mexico slated to make history this year by electing its first woman president.

At the same time, activists in Argentina — long the leader of regional feminist movements — have been

left reeling with the rise of anarcho-capitalist President Javier Milei. Since taking office in December, Milei has shuttered both the country's women's affairs ministry and the national anti-discrimination agency, and on Wednesday told high school students in a speech that "abortion is murder."

Across Latin America, many countries still suffer from soaring rates of violence against women, including disappearances and murders of women, known as femicides. Just in Mexico, an average of 21 women have gone missing a day in 2024, according to government figures, a 78% jump

from the yearly average in 2023.

While changes in Latin America over the past decade are "undeniably progress," protests like Friday's have been led by a new generation of young women that feel tired of the sharp contrasts that continue to permeate their historically "macho" nations, said Jennifer Piscopo, professor Gender and Politics at Royal Holloway University of London.

"They're growing up in countries where on paper Latin American women's lives look like they should be fairly well-treated, but that's not their experience on the ground. □



People carry a banner that reads in Spanish "Women and Work and Hope" during a march marking International Women's Day in Caracas, Venezuela, Friday, March 8, 2024.

Associated Press

UNICEF: 230 million females are circumcised globally, 30 million more than in 2016

By **NOHA ELHENNAWY**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Over 230 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation, most of whom live in Africa, according to a report issued on Friday by the United Nations children's agency.

In the last eight years, some 30 million people have undergone the procedure, in which external genitalia are partially or fully removed, UNICEF estimated in the report, which was released on International Women's Day.

The percentage of women and girls who experience female genital mutilation is declining, UNICEF said, but it warned that efforts to eradicate the practice are too slow to keep up with fast-growing populations.

"The practice of female genital mutilation is declining, but not fast enough," the report said.

The practice, incorrectly believed to control women's sexuality, can cause serious bleeding and even death.



The UNICEF logo is seen at the German UNICEF headquarters in Cologne, Germany, on Feb. 5, 2008.

Girls are subjected to the procedure at ages ranging from infancy to adolescence.

Long term, it can lead to urinary tract infections, menstrual problems, pain, decreased sexual satisfac-

tion and childbirth complications, as well as depression, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"We're also seeing a worrying trend that more girls are subjected to the practice

at younger ages, many before their fifth birthday. That further reduces the window to intervene," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

Some 144 million women and girls have been

through female genital mutilation in Africa alone, followed by Asia and the Middle East with 80 million and 6 million respectively, the report said. Somalia tops the list of countries where the practice, also known as female circumcision, is prevalent, with 99% of the female population between the ages of 15 and 49 having been circumcised.

Burkina Faso made the most significant progress, reducing the proportion of women between 15 and 49 who were circumcised from 80% to 30% over three decades.

The report also showed that 4 in every 10 survivors live in conflict-torn countries with high population growth rates, adding that political instability disrupts efforts to prevent the practice and provide support to victims.

"Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sudan account for the largest numbers of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilation in conflict-affected countries," the report said. □

Associated Press

China's top court, prosecutors report surging cybercams, stress protecting national security

By **ELAINE KURTENBACH**
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China saw large increases in arrests and cases of phone and internet scams last year, according to reports presented Friday to the National People's Congress that stressed the ruling Communist Party's determination to safeguard national security and public order.

A report issued by the Supreme People's Procuratorate said the number of cases of computer crimes including social media fraud jumped 36.2% in 2023 and involved 323,000 people. The sharp increase likely reflects a doubling down on cross-border computer fraud that has resulted in thousands of people, some of them victims of human traffickers who forced them

to work for crime rings in remote areas of Myanmar and other neighboring countries, being returned to China.

Indictments of people for telecoms fraud jumped nearly 67% to about 51,000,

the report said. Overall, arrests surged 47% to 726,000 and indictments were up 17.3% to 168,800, the report said.

China's national congress serves mainly a ceremonial role, endorsing policies set



Military officers and delegates leave the Great Hall of the People after attending the second plenary session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, Friday, March 8, 2024.

Associated Press

by President Xi Jinping and other top leaders of the Communist Party. It is due to end its six-day session on Monday with approvals of reports by Premier Li Qiang and others that set the party's plans for the year.

As China marks the 75th anniversary of the Oct. 1, 1949, founding of the People's Republic of China, the party is stressing its determination to fortify its control and protect national security.

Courts will "Implement the overall concept of national security and severely punish crimes that endanger national security and public safety according to the law," a report by the Supreme People's Court said. It said authorities would persist in crackdowns on organized crime, telecoms

and internet fraud, cross border gambling and graft. The report highlighted perennial efforts to root out nepotism, bribery and other corruption, noting there were 25 cases last year involving senior-level officials. In 2023, courts handled 24,000 cases of bribery and other graft, up nearly 20%, it said.

The prosecutors' report said 346 people were indicted last year on suspicion of involvement with fraudulent IPOs, insider trading and market manipulation.

China has gradually been updating its legal system to reflect changing times. A Chinese court handled the country's first individual bankruptcy case last year, as corporate bankruptcies jumped nearly 70% from the year before. □

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.



The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time.

For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained

a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge".



On march 18th we celebrate our Aruban heroes: Meet the iconic figures of Aruban independence



(Oranjestad)—For the second part of our National Hymn and Flag Day, Aruba Today would like to dedicate this article to our local heroes; our founding fathers and creative minds that brought us our Anthem and Flag.

Betico Croes

The father of the Aruban nation or the Liberator (Liberador) as he is called often, was an active man in Caribbean organizations while he studied in the Netherlands. Betico was a social man, participated in sports and the social and cultural community. He worked as a teacher and instituted the official seal, flag and hymn for the island. During the Round table Conference of 1981, he was responsible for for-

mally setting the date for Aruba's independency. Betico also became leader of the political party Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo (MEP), now the main party that forms the current gov-

ernment that was elected in September 2021.

Croes himself was not able to enjoy the results of his ongoing struggle; he was involved in an accident on December 31, 1985, and went into a coma. He passed away on November 26, 1986. For the Aruban people, his words will never be forgotten. He told his people: "Si mi cay na caminda, gara e bandera y sigui cu e lucha" which means "If I fall along the way, grab the flag and continue the fight."

J.H.A "Henny" Eman

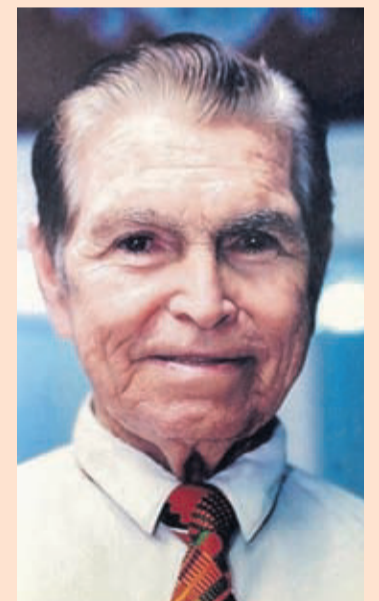
As mentioned in our previ-

ous article on the Status Aparte, Henny Eman was the first to lead the separatist movement on the island. He was also the founder of one of Aruba's biggest political party today, the Aruban People Party (AVP). During his career, he advocated strongly for the separation from the central power of Curacao, and for equal representation of Aruba. He was member of the Aruban Court of Policy, and was later elected to the Council of State.

During his tenure, he was enacted projects like the Oranjestad Harbour and the Queen Beatrix Airport (then Princess Beatrix Airport).

Juan Chabaya "Padu" Lampe and Rufo Wever

Padu Lampe and Rufo Wever were both musical giants on the island, having learned and played music from a very early age. In 1976, the Executive Council of Aruba appointed a committee to create an anthem for the island. "Aruba Dushi Tera" was written initially by Lampe and Wever, (Aruba Sweet Land) was already well-known two decades before. The committee decided to keep the



old melody of the song but add more verses. The last verse of the song, which later was approved as Aruba's national anthem on March 18th, 1976, was written by Hubert Booi.



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Lessons from our elders

Plants and fruits for medicinal use (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In last week's edition, we shared with our readers some medicinal use for plants and fruits, passed down from our elders through generations. This week, we present two more uses of fruits and plants for medicinal use.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.



Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegran-



ates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes.

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

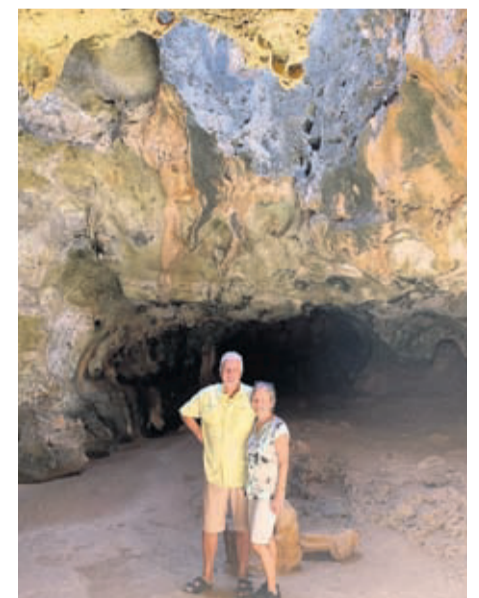
Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish

your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitors Mike & Kim Springer from Nova Scotia, Canada.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is living your best life. We've been visiting your fantastic island since December 1 and have just loved our time here. It's been a great place to be to avoid our cold snowy winter back home. From Arikok National Park to the fantastic eating choices and of course the beaches."



Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!

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The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a



young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for

gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant.

Sources: Etnia Nativa & goldmineranch.com.

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at La Cabana Beach Resort Aruba!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. These honorees were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors
Mr. Robert & Pennie O'Hara from Wisconsin, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of La Cabana Beach Resort Aruba bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba's sun, sand and surf.
- Aruba's culture diversity.
- Aruba's wonderful restaurants.
- "Guaranteed Sunshine"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



Lend a helping hand

Aruba Doet: Aruba's biggest volunteering event!

The beautiful white-sanded beaches, the amazing luxurious resorts and the mouthwatering choice of restaurant dishes are a huge attraction of Aruba that make up for a fantastic vacation. If you would like to add a little local connection to that, next weekend is yours. The biggest volunteer event ARUBA DOET will take place next week Friday and Saturday, March 15th and 16th. You are most welcome to join and roll up your sleeves together with the locals to create some happiness on One Happy Island...Just by doing.

CEDE Aruba, in collaboration with the Oranje Fonds, will be organizing Aruba Doet for the 13th consecutive year. This is another opportunity for social organizations to carry out work or organize social activities for their specific groups with the help of volunteers. On Friday, March 15th, and Saturday, March 16th, 2024, CEDE Aruba in cooperation with the Oranje Fonds will organize Aruba Doet, the largest volunteer action in Aruba.

ARUBA DOET started in 2013 under the initiative of the Oranje Fonds. Under names like NL Doet, Aruba Doet, Bon Doet, Cura Doet, Statia Doet, Saba Doet, and SMX Doet, these six initiatives spotlight volunteer work and encourage everyone to lend a hand for a day. Thus, the Oranje Fonds, along with thousands of social organizations and partners like CEDE Aruba, organizes the largest volunteer action in the Kingdom.

Volunteers are the driving force behind many social organizations. With Aruba Doet, CEDE



Aruba and the Oranje Fonds demonstrate how important active citizenship is for the community. Furthermore, ARUBA DOET contributes to the positive image of volunteer work and illustrates how fulfilling it can be.

In 2021, they had 2,600 volunteers and 191 projects; in 2022, over 3,200 volunteers contributed to 189 projects in Aruba, and in 2023, they had nearly 4,000 volunteers and 194 projects. Naturally, in 2024, they aim to have even more people actively participating during the days of Aruba Doet.

The Oranje Fonds is the largest fund in the social sector and represents the best of the Kingdom.

Each year, the Oranje Fonds invests approximately €30 million in organizations and initiatives that strengthen social ties in the Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima are the royal patrons of this fund. Visit www.oranjefonds.nl for more information.

CEDE Aruba is an organization that provides support for development and co-financing of programs and projects in the social sector. These programs and projects are introduced and implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In Aruba, there are many NGOs working to improve social facilities for the community. CEDE Aruba assists NGOs with the development and financing of various sustainable projects. Visit www.cedearuba.org for more information.

Pictures can be found on Aruba Doet's Facebook Page.



Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. These honorees were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.



The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors
Mr. Bruce & Mrs. Karen Love Lace from Michigan, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their home away from home.



Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's Sun & Sea.
- Aruba's friendly people.
- "Wonderful Hotel".
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "Winter Vacation".

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Visit the island's popular cave sites!

(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an “off-road” tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves... and be sure to bring a flashlight!



the Huliba Cave).

Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

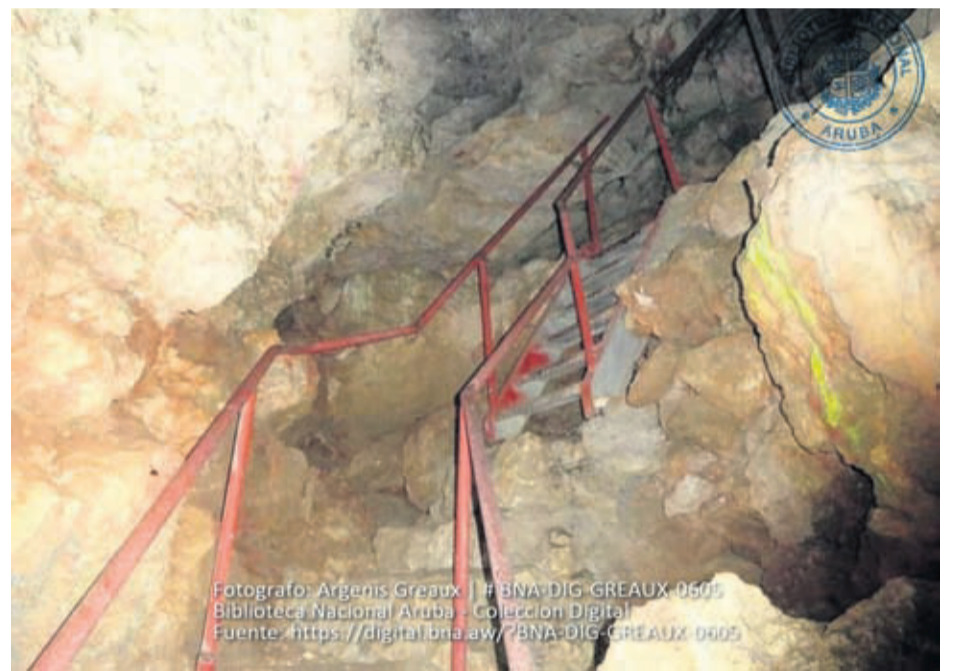
Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is



heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Famous

1 Auction proviso

5 Rocker setting

10 Recap

12 In the know

13 Become narrower

14 Put off

15 Genesis name

16 Slalom maneuver

18 Bar bill

19 Edit

21 Tiara adorners

22 Some pitchers

24 Key

25 Wild parties

29 Do some modeling

30 Texas team

32 Auction buy

33 Cal. column

34 Grammys category

35 Corn-husker city

37 "Pal Joey" writer

39 Moon of Saturn

41 Appears

42 Cross the stream

DOWN

1 Showy flower

2 More smooth

3 Hamper

4 Take to court

5 Stationery buys

6 Have debts

7 Roof supporter

8 Defeats decisively

9 Cook's collection

S	A	W	T	O	T	O	W	E	L
P	R	O	U	D	A	R	O	M	A
R	A	M	B	O	L	A	M	B	S
A	B	E	R	O	L	L	E	R	S
Y	I	N	S	U	B	N	Y	E	
S	A	S	H	T	O	R	S	O	
		D	U	D	Y	E	S		
		B	O	N	E	S	O	T	T
T	A	U	C	U	E	U	R	N	
O	N	B	R	A	N	D	A	S	
P	A	L	I	N	S	P	I	N	E
I	N	E	P	T	E	R	E	C	T
C	A	S	E	S	L	O	S	E	S

Yesterday's answer

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 11 Exact | 27 Book |
| 17 Out-standing | 28 Flew high |
| 20 Full of energy | 29 Novel ideas |
| 21 "Understand?" | 31 Digging tool |
| 23 Literary adaptation | 33 Stadium group |
| 25 Dorm sharer | 36 Deli meat |
| 26 Will subject | 38 In what way |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10			11	12				
13				14				
15			16	17			18	
19			20			21		
	22					23		
			24					
	25	26				27	28	
29				30				31
32			33				34	
35			36			37	38	
39						40		
41							42	

A X Y D I B A A X R
i s L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-9 **CRYPTOQUOTE**
B G X Y X G N D M X A X Y K X B

W X X M N M E M H M B X Y X D B H M R

S H Z X . — O N Y J B U N H M
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS? — MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Cruise ship Schedule: Mar 09- Mar 17 2024

SAT	09	STAR PRIDE	06.00	18.00	1
TUE	12	SILVER DAWN SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00 08.00 08.00	23.00 21.00 ****	1 1 1
WED	13	ROTTERDAM GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS - Dept.	08.00 16.00 ****	17.00 **** 18.00	1 1 1
THU	14	NORWEGIAN SKY MSC DIVINA GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS - Dept	08.00 07.00 ****	20.00 14.00 18.00	1 1 1
FRI	15	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR WIND SPIRIT	07.00 10.00	18.00 23.00	1 1
SAT	16	AIDAPERLA	08.00	18.00	1
SUN	17	CELEBRITY BEYOND CELEBRITY SUMMIT	08.00 10.00	23.00 23.30	1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where



Pharmacies

Aloe	584-4606
Centro Medico	584-5794
Central	585-1965
Dakota	588-7364
Del Pueblo	582-1253
Eagle	587-9011
Kibrahacha	583-4908
Maria	585-8145
DiServicio Noord	586-4606
Oduber	582-1780
Paradera	588-6638
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Santa Cruz	585-8028
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Italians cut back on olive oil as prices surge, survey says. Producers are pushing back on that



Olive oil bottles are seen in a supermarket in Rome, Friday, March 8, 2024.

Associated Press

By COLLEEN BARRY
AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) — One-third of Italians have reduced their consumption of extra virgin olive oil, a mainstay of the Mediterranean diet, due to skyrocketing prices, according to a survey released Friday.

But Italian producers are pushing back against the data, saying the snapshot of consumer sentiment does not give a full picture and that sales of higher-quality Italian extra virgin olive oil are actually up. Consumers reported cutting back consumption of extra virgin olive oil by at least 30% to as much as half as average supermarket prices have risen from

4 euros to 9 euros a bottle, according to a survey by the Piepoli independent research institute.

Nearly half of those questioned said they were substituting olive oil with cheaper seed oil. The survey of 500 Italian adults had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.

The reported drop in consumption is much less of a hit than in other olive oil-producing Mediterranean Sea countries, as two years of drought has drastically cut production in Spain, the world's largest olive oil producer, and pushed up global prices.

Greece and Spain have both seen olive oil sales

plummet by one-third over the last year, according to industry estimates.

Even the softer Italian numbers are too much for the industry to take quietly. David Granieri, president of the Unaprol olive-growing consortium that represents half of Italy's production, said the higher prices have helped clarify the market, separating lower-quality extra virgin olive oils from premium extra virgin olive oils.

While the Piepoli survey showed consumers buying less oil from supermarket shelves, Granieri said industry data indicates domestic sales of extra virgin olive oil produced in Italy, which can cost up to 14 euros a liter, were up 8% in the first two months of this year. □

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2 Bed Garden view \$15,000
3 Bed Ocean view \$30,000
WK 51 Ocean view \$65,000
WK 52 Ocean View \$65,000
WK 7 and 14 - all views
GOLD SEASON
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2 Bed Oceanside \$9,750
2 Bed Ocean view \$9,000
2 Bed Garden view \$7,000
3 Bed Ocean view \$16,500

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club PLATINUM SEASON
2 Bed Oceanfront \$36,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$27,000
1 Bed Ocean front \$22,000
1 Bed Ocean View \$17,500
GOLD SEASON
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2 Bed Ocean view \$10,000
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San Nicolas
Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

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San Nicolas:Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
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Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
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Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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Karol G becomes first Latina named woman of the year at Billboard ceremony honoring global musicians

By MARIA SHERMAN
AP Music Writer
INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)

— Karol G made history at Wednesday night's Billboard Women in Music awards ceremony.

"This is the first time, ever, a Latina is named woman of the year," Karol G began her acceptance speech after a fiery performance of her reggaetón hit, "Amargura." And so, in honor of that incredible feat, she delivered the rest of her speech in Spanish. The global superstar received the award at the YouTube Theater in Inglewood, California, after a lively introduction from her "Griselda" co-star Sofia Vergara.

Of course, Karol G is used to making history at this point. Last month, she became the first woman to win in the best música urbana category at the Grammys, a moment that may reflect changing perceptions of reggaetón and Latin hip-hop as exclusively "men's music." Last year, her album "Mañana Será Bonito," one of The Associated Press' picks for best of the year, became the first ever Spanish-language album



Karol G performs as part of the "Mañana Será Bonito" tour at Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024.

by a female artist to hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200. (Not only that, but "Mañana Será Bonito" is the first Latin album by a Latina to reach No. 1 on the albums chart since Selena Quintanilla's posthumous "Dreaming of You," did in 1995 following her high-profile murder.) When Karol G embarked on a stadium tour in support of the release, she became the first Latina to headline

at many of the venues where she performed. To call Karol G's rise meteoric wouldn't be hyperbole. In the crowds above the stage at the YouTube Theater, fans wielded glowing light sticks official merchandise for the K-pop girl group NewJeans, who attended, performed an animated medley of their viral hits "Super Shy" and "ETA," and were awarded the title

of group of the year. Later, the audience lead chants of "Bichota" an affectionate nickname for Karol G, derived from Puerto Rican slang "bichote," which refers to a drug dealer, but transformed into a term of empowerment with the feminine "a." It might've temporarily confused host Tracee Ellis Ross, who otherwise masterfully guided the crowd through-

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out the evening, but it certainly underscored a major theme of the evening: to celebrate women in the music business is to celebrate women globally.

A new award category heralding performers who are "global forces" were given to women from around the world for their needle-moving contributions to their home countries, including Annalisa representing Italy, Sarah Geronimo from the Philippines and Luísa Sonza from Brazil, who performed and was joined by Demi Lovato for "Penhasco2," their Portuguese power ballad.

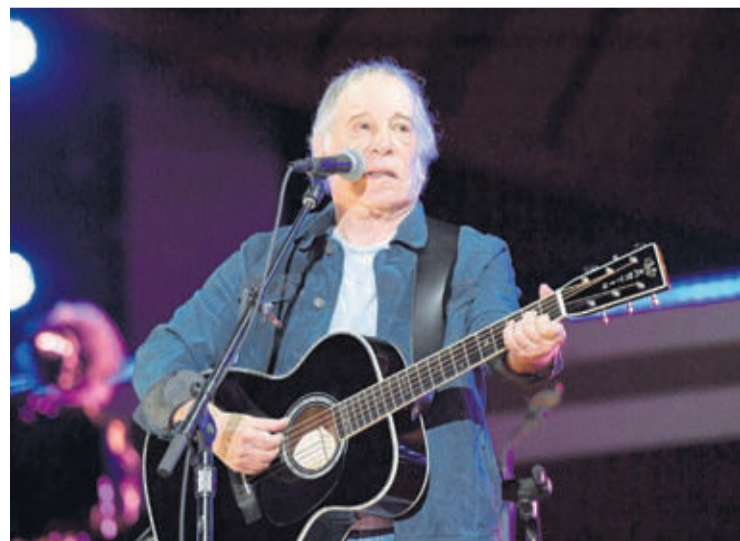
The second annual producer of the year award was given to PinkPantheress, known for her jungle and UK garage beats woven into songs that avoid easy classification.

"As a woman of color in electronic music specifically 2-step, drum and bass, it's taken a lot for the genre to be recognized on a wider scale a lot of people don't expect me to look the way I did, making the music I was making," she said in her speech. "Even now, people don't want to take my music seriously." □

Paul Simon to receive PEN America's Literary Service Award

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP National Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Paul Simon's latest honor places him among public figures

well outside the music industry. He is this year's winner of PEN America's PEN/Audible Literary Service Award, which previously



Paul Simon performs at Global Citizen Live in Central Park in New York on Sept. 25, 2021.

Associated Press

has been given to former President Barack Obama, the late Nobel laureate Toni Morrison and Stephen King among others.

The 82-year-old Simon is known for such classic songs as "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "The Sound of Silence" and for his globe-spanning musical tastes, from Brazil to South Africa to his native New York City. Later this month, he will be featured in the MGM+ docuseries "In Restless Dreams: The Music of Paul Simon."

"Paul Simon has inspired fans worldwide with lyrics and songs that entire generations know by heart and can recognize from the very first notes," PEN America CEO Suzanne Nossel said in a statement Thurs-

day. "His fascination with different cultures, traditions and rhythms have helped open our ears and minds to essential musical traditions. We are elated to pay tribute to this unparalleled creative artist whose music, along with his commitment to humane values and humanitarian causes, has made him a cultural icon." Simon will receive his award at PEN's annual gala, to be held May 16 at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan. Last year, PEN presented the literary prize to a longtime friend of Simon's, "Saturday Night Live" creator Lorne Michaels.

On Thursday, PEN also announced it was presenting its Business Visionary award to Almar Latour, CEO of

Dow Jones and publisher of The Wall Street Journal. PEN, a prominent advocate for free expression, cited his efforts to bring about the release of Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who has been held in Russia for nearly a year on allegations of espionage.

"At a time when facts and truth are in question, the Wall Street Journal's role as a source of credible, reported news is indispensable," PEN President Jennifer Finney Boylan said in a statement. "Almar's commitment to delivering trusted news and information and building sustainable news operations is a lifelong calling. His fierce support for press freedom and for Evan has been inspiring." □

Kirk Cousins, Chris Jones, Saquon Barkley are among the star players set to test NFL free agency

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Kirk Cousins will be a free agent for the first time since the Vikings gave him the first fully-guaranteed quarterback deal in the NFL. Baker Mayfield is expected to stay put in Tampa Bay. Russell Wilson has to make another move. Joe Flacco could find a new home, too.

The quarterback carousel will start spinning when the NFL's free agency period opens Monday with the legal tampering period. Players can't officially sign new deals until the opening of the league's new year on Wednesday.

While the quarterbacks get much of the attention, many of the best players available play other positions.

All-Pro defensive tackle Chris Jones heads a list that includes fellow defensive tackle Christian Wilkins, edge rushers Danielle Hunter, Chase Young and Jonathan Greenard, safeties Justin Simmons and Xavier McKinney, cornerbacks Xavien Howard and Tre'Davious White, linebackers Patrick Queen and Lavonte David, and many others.

There's also plenty of talented guys on the offensive side, including running



Minnesota Vikings' Kirk Cousins throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022, in Detroit.

backs Saquon Barkley, Derrick Henry, Josh Jacobs and D'Andre Swift, offensive tackles Tyron Smith, Jonah Williams and Trent Brown, wide receivers Calvin Ridley, Marquise Brown and Odell Beckham Jr., and more.

Eight players received the non-exclusive franchise tag, including wide receivers Tee Higgins and Michael Pittman, edge rusher Josh Allen and All-Pro safety Antoine Winfield. They can still test the open market, but teams would have to give

up a pair of first-round picks to sign them.

Jones will have an opportunity to cash in after helping Kansas City win its third Super Bowl in five years. The Chiefs tagged cornerback L'Jarius Sneed instead of placing it on Jones for the second straight season.

Jones' price tag will likely exceed the \$95 million, three-year deal eight-time All-Pro DT Aaron Donald got from the Los Angeles Rams in 2022.

The Chiefs already made it clear re-signing Jones is a

top priority. They can get Sneed back for at least one year for the \$19.8 million tag, give him a long-term deal or trade him.

Half of the NFL's teams have more than \$30 million available in salary cap, making it a player-friendly market to a certain degree.

There's much interest in how the running backs will fare.

Barkley, Jacobs and Tony Pollard received franchise tags last season but no team wanted to commit \$11.9 million to its running

back.

Austin Ekeler rounds out the top six.

The Giants seem ready to move on from Barkley, who should get interest from plenty of teams, including a pair of New York's NFC East rivals. The Eagles will be looking for a running back at the right price, of course, if they don't retain Swift, who is coming off his first 1,000-yard season. Barkley would be an upgrade for the Cowboys over Pollard.

Henry is 30 but he ran for 1,167 yards and scored 12 touchdowns in 2023 and has had five 1,000-yard seasons in the last six years. He'd be a better fit for a Super Bowl contender than Tennessee.

NFL teams have undervalued the running back position to the point where they have the lowest franchise tag number among the skill players. Wide receivers are now nearly \$10 million higher at \$21.8 million.

"I think that, at the end of the day, talented players end up getting paid," Eagles general manager Howie Roseman said. "So, I think everyone will kind of have value on players just like any other position. Obviously, those guys handle the ball a lot, and they're important players." □

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Las Vegas Aces' A'ja Wilson (22) looks to pass during the second half in Game 4 of a WNBA basketball final playoff series against the New York Liberty, Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023, in New York.

Associated Press

Two-time defending champion Aces become the 1st WNBA team to sell out allotted season tickets

By **MARK ANDERSON**
AP Sports Writer

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP) — The two-time defending champion Las Vegas Aces became the first WNBA team to sell out its allotted season tickets, the club said Thursday.

Las Vegas, which sold out its approximately 8,600 season tickets, led the league in attendance last season with 9,551 fans per game and had nine sellouts. Most games were at Michelob UL-

tra Arena. The Aces played twice at the much larger T-Mobile Arena where they drew more than 12,000 fans for both games.

Single-game tickets for most games will go on sale in late April. There also will be single tickets available later this month for the Aces' game at T-Mobile on Sept. 3 against the Chicago Sky.

Las Vegas, which opens its season on May 14 against the Phoenix Mercury, will

try to become the second team in WNBA history to win three championships in a row. The Houston Comets won four straight titles from 1997-2000.

The Aces defeated the New York Liberty in four games in last season's WNBA Finals. Las Vegas is a plus-100 favorite to win another championship, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. New York is the next closest at plus-230. No other team is close. □

After Hurricanes land Kuznetsov, Guentzel, East rivals follow with trade deadline deals of their own

By **JOHN WAWROW** and **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writers

Once the Carolina Hurricanes began stocking up in the hours before the NHL trade deadline, it didn't take long for the league's many other contenders to join in on Friday.

The Hurricanes kicked off the final day of trading by acquiring center Evgeny Kuznetsov from the Washington Capitals. Washington acquired a 2025 third-round pick and is retaining half of his salary through next season—a cap hit of \$7.8 million with \$8 million due in 2024-25.

It was Carolina's second considerable move in 12 hours, after the Hurricanes landed scoring winger Jake Guentzel from Pittsburgh in a blockbuster deal.

What followed was a string of moves made mostly by Eastern Conference rivals in a bid to keep up.

Two days after acquiring Vladimir Tarasenko from Ottawa, the league-leading Florida Panthers added depth and leadership in landing Buffalo's Kyle Okposo.

Buffalo acquired minor-league defenseman Calle Sjalín in a deal that provides the 35-year-old Sabres captain a chance to compete in the playoffs in what could be his final NHL season.

The Boston Bruins became the last of the top contenders in the East to add, getting three-time Cup champion Patrick Maroon from



Washington Capitals center Evgeny Kuznetsov (92) skates in the second period of an NHL hockey game, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024, in Denver.

Minnesota for young forward Luke Toporowski and a conditional 2026 sixth-round pick.

The Metropolitan Division-leading New York Rangers added blue-line depth by acquiring Chad Ruhwedel from a Penguins team that is suddenly entering a rebuilding mode.

And Philadelphia shored up its defense by acquiring veteran Erik Johnson for a fourth-round draft pick in a deal with Buffalo.

In the West, the surging Jets acquired forward Tyler Tofoli in a trade with New Jersey to become Winnipeg's latest addition after landing center Sean Monahan from Montreal during the All-Star break. The Devils acquired a 2024 third- and

a 2025 second-round pick while also retaining half of the pending free agent's salary for the remainder of the season.

And the Nashville Predators, who hold one of the West's two wild-card spots, attempted to shore up their playoff position by getting forward Jason Zucker from Arizona for a sixth-rounder this year.

The focus remains on the Hurricanes, who continued adding to an already talented roster, and a team that fell short after managing a combined six goals in being swept by Florida in the Eastern Conference finals.

"Evgeny is a high-level playmaker who will add to our offensive firepower,"

Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell said. "He brings even more playoff experience to our lineup, and we're excited to give him a fresh start in Carolina."

Kuznetsov, 31, cleared waivers last weekend upon being able to practice after receiving care from the player assistance program. He was then demoted to the minors, with Capitals GM Brian MacLellan saying he would attempt to trade the player who led Washington in scoring during its run to win the 2018 Stanley Cup. Guentzel is eager to join the Hurricanes and get back on the ice, with the trade coming as he is on the verge of returning to play after missing nearly a

month with an upper body injury.

"You know what the team's done in the past and how close they've been," Guentzel said Friday. "This is a special team. They've got a lot of high-end players, and they're really well-coached."

There remain numerous players who are in position to be dealt before the deadline, with much of the focus on goalies. Calgary's Jacob Markstrom, Montreal's Jake Allen and Boston's Linus Ullmark are among the candidates being shopped.

The Capitals might not be done with Nic Dowd, Charlie Lindgren and Max Pacioretty considered to be on the market.

Seattle, which traded center Alexander Wennberg to the New York Rangers earlier in the week, did not have to do the same with winger Jordan Eberle.

The Kraken agreed to terms with Eberle on a two-year contract worth \$9.5 million. The Los Angeles Kings are the only team among the top 12 Stanley Cup favorites not to make a significant addition over the past several weeks.

Meantime, it's the Capitals and Penguins who find themselves in the unusual position of being sellers at the trade deadline after a near two decades of dominance that began with the arrivals of Alex Ovechkin in Washington in 2004 and Sidney Crosby in Pittsburgh a year later. □

Ryan Reynolds' Wrexham returning to play in U.S. in July

WREXHAM, Wales (AP) — Ryan Reynolds' Wrexham is headed back to the United States. The low-level Welsh club which has gained global recognition after being bought by Hollywood duo Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, will play English Premier League side Chelsea on July 24 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

Wrexham also played Chelsea plus Manchester United on an offseason U.S. tour last year.

Reynolds and McElhenney have transformed the fortunes of Wrexham, which was a down-on-its-luck non-league team before their investment. Players and staff have become crossover stars thanks to the documentary series "Welcome to Wrexham."

On the field, Wrexham won promotion to the English fourth division last season. It is challenging for a second successive promotion this season. □



Wrexham co-owner Ryan Reynolds, center, celebrates with members of the Wrexham FC soccer team the promotion to the Football League in Wrexham, Wales, on May 2, 2023.

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